Reprinted from the Annals of Oriental Research Vol. XXX. 2.

UNITY OF SENTIMENT IN SANSKRIT PLAYS

(Prof. L. Venkataratnam Endowment Lectures)

1979–80

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Price Rs. 2-50

891.22
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Printed at Rathnam Press 41, Badrian Street, Madras-1.

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L. VENKATARATNAM ENDOWMENT LECTURES 1979-80

1. THE PRIMACY OF SENTIMENT IN PLAYS

In the entire field of art which includes literature emotions play a conclusively dominant role. Facts, even figures may be used by the artist but entirely in a lower key to evoke, nourish and sustain emotions. Literature is the subtlest form of art and poetry (which in India is the generic head under which plays are classified) is the highest and the most typical branch of literature. Lowth says "The essential function of poetry is the expression of feeling". John Masefield writes, "Poetry is an art in which the artist by means of rhythm and great sincerety can convey to others the sentiment which he feels about life." P.W.K. Stone (1750-1820) in his book *The Art of Poetry* observes that "feeling is often spoken of as the motive force of poetry, that which inspires the poet and impels him to write".

What is generally true of all art must have added veracity in the case of drama. All Indian writers on poetics agree on this. Abhinavagupta says,

रससमुदायो हि नाटयम् and रस एव नाटयम् ।

in his commentary *Abhinavabhārati* on Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra.* Indeed he proceeds to quote his teacher Bhaṭṭa Tauta to prove that *Kāvya* cannot give pleasure except where it begins to resemble actual experience which, of course, is built around an emotion as the central core' and he tops it off with a quotation

1. काव्यार्थविषये हि प्रत्यक्षकल्पसंवेदनोदये रसोदय इत्युपाध्यायाः ।

from the great Ācarya's *Kāvyakautuka* which asserts that *kāvya* becomes pleasurable only when it becomes dramatic

प्रयोगत्वानापन्ने काव्ये नास्वादसंभवः ।

This passage thus underscores the supremacy of drama as the most effective form of literature and the primacy of emotion-based experience in drama.

To the question why emotions should have such a primacy in literature (with added emphasis in the case of drama) the answer is that the peculiar and characteristic pleasure that literature affords is centered round and is caused by the delineation of emotions. Everything else like the story interest, like felicity of diction is only ancillary to this central circus pole the delineation of feeling on which depends the literary work for its very existence. If a spell-binding story, the kind of plot development which makes the reader unable to put down the work till he comes to the end were the important thing in a literary work, detective stories, spy adventures and wild west yarns would rank as literature of the highest quality - an assessment no one is disposed to accept. A chunky plot with a lot of gory adventures may interest us at our "off" moments, may help us to while away a rainy Sunday but it touches us only at the periphery of our personality leaving no permanent impression. The same is the level and degree of impact which good diction and verbal tricks have on us - they too affect us only at the surface and the inner man is left largely uninfluenced, uninvolved. Coleridge says in his *Biographia* "Metre and diction are the externals of poetry". Neither plot nor metre and diction can form the core of literature, though the big part they play in enhancing the value of a literary work cannot be denied.

Literary works are sought after, appreciated and remembered for the peculiar pleasure they afford and the permanent impression they leave on the personality through the manner in which they deal with human emotions, making them meaningful and significant for the reader. The thought content of a poem has quite incidental value and is not its chief excuse for existence;

we go to literature for the sustenance and nourishment it affords to our emotional personality. Thoughts, facts and figures are much more economically and directly expressed in non-literary works. Thus, neither thoughts nor plot interest, metre nor diction can be mistaken to be the core or essence of any literary production: the feelings or emotions are the essence, they are purveyed solely by literature (and other forms of art) and literary works are to be judged solely on the touchstone of feeling.

But why should this be so? What is it in a sentiment delineated in a work of literature that has this kind of reader appeal? The answer lies in the fact that in a real sense emotion is life. Life is participation in emotions that have significance for the participant. Art and literature are imitations of life and therefore have to deal primarily in emotions, the very stuff of life. The only difference between the former and the latter is that in life emotion-laden experiences appear haphazard, disorganised and not conforming to a pattern while those depicted in art and literature are organised in accord with an artistic pattern. And creative genius in the men who create art and literature can make these emotions appear to have a meaning and significance for the connoisseur.

But why should emotions mean so much in the life of humans that we express life itself in terms of emotions? It would be beyond the scope of this little work to enter into a detailed discussion of the possible theories by way of furnishing an answer to this question. One theory[2] can be briefly stated here, however, to show the trend of thinking that is likely to bear fruit. Evolution is an extremely long drawn out process expressed in terms of millions of years: in this process the development of the thinking part of the brain is a comparatively recent happening. The emotional heritage of man is hoary while the intellectual is a matter of very recent occurrence. Hence man is far more used to feeling than to thinking and habits of a species count a great deal in behavioural patterns.

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2. *Man's Presumptuous Brain*—Dr. A. T. W. Simeons.

Secondly, in the design of even the human brain, the part dealing with emotional drives is directly connected to the nervous system while that concerned with thinking (the cortex) is connected only indirectly: it is actually connected with the emotional part and only through it with the nervous system. This might mean that decisions arrived at emotionally can issue forth in action far more readily than those taken as a result of logical thinking. There is a theory that the emotional part called the Old Brain (on account of its evolutionary age) consults the New Brain (the centre of thinking) when it feels like it and may accept or reject the proffered advice. This may account for the observed fact that most of the decisions arrived at by individuals are emotion-based rather than intellect-based. The theory, if true, would account for our noticeable preference for emotions over cold logical thought, for our clearly marked feeling of being at home in the world of emotions and of being ill-at-ease in the world of ideas, whatever degree of sophistication we may have attained.

These theories of psychology are by no means proven but they sound reasonable and may well account for the indisputable fact that man is largely an emotional being and emotions matter a good deal more to him than he may admit to. Man makes high intellectual claims for himself and fancies that his decisions are arrived at in the cold light of logical thinking: this is largely an illusion: more often we arrive at a decision or conclusion via the emotions and then proceed to build a logical pathway to it. The unshakable hold of the arts and literature on man conclusively proves the primacy of emotions in his personality.

Now, according to the well-known *rasa*-theory first prepounded by Bharata himself and later developed by other great writers, the various devices like *vibhāvās*, *anubhāvās*, etc., playing on the *sthāyibhāva* in the spectator generate rasa which is relished by him. This *sthāyibhāva* may perhaps be understood as a certain emotional apperceptive propensity which is found in varying degrees in people. Believers in *karma*-theory would certainly agree that this innate propensity is built up by the *vāsanās* of

previous births. There may also be a hereditary factor playing its part in this. But certainly there is a big part played by culture: the more experiences one goes through, and the more intensely one goes through them, the higher is this propensity that is built up. There is much more of this in a man who has been everywhere and seen everything, who has lived it up, burnt the candle of life at both the ends than in a village bumpkin who has vegetated all his life in the colourless society of a backwoods village.

This propensity is essentially apperceptive. Apperception is the faculty by which if we know something about a certain thing a condition is created in our mind which prompts us to know more about that thing. This is sparked by the formation of what is known as an apperceptive mass in our mind: this apperceptive mass makes us interested in more information, more contact with the earlier one which was responsible for its being set up; owing to the agency of this apperceptive mass, further learning on the same lines is rendered much easier. To provide an example, for long years we might have shown no interest in distant countries like Venezuela. But after our brother-in-law leaves for that country to accept a U.N. job there, we avidly read everything about that country that is published in the newspapers: our ears cock up when we hear Venezuela mentioned in a drawing room conversation. An apperceptive mass created in our mind in favour of Venezuela is responsible for this.

Sthāyibhāva is an emotional apperceptive propensity: for the experiences of various types we undergo set up apperceptive masses in favour of those types of emotion-centred experiences. Thus tender attachment to some relatives, friends, or the wife develops the *sthāyi* रति and earlier deprivations nourish the *sthāyi* शोक. It is only for this reason that a man mature in emotional experiences has much better developed *sthāyis* than one who has led a bland, eventless life.

If a person with well developed sthāyis goes to see a play, the emotion-laden scenes with the ancillary music, settings etc. play upon the specific *sthāyi*, generating a flow of sentiment which

leads to bliss. An important condition under which only this can happen is that the spectator should feel that the scene played is authentic, that it has a meaning and significance for him. This condition can be created only by great creative artists: though many qualities are required to achieve this, the most important of them all is propriety or negatively, the avoidance of impropriety.

अनौचित्यादृते नान्यत् रसभङ्गस्य कारणम् ।

Dhvanyāloka—III Uddyota, Parikara śloka a.

The condition, when fulfilled seems to open the mental doors for the artistic impulses to enter and play upon the emotional apperceptive propensities and generate rasa. This metaphor gives an adequate idea of the importance of this condition as without its being fulfilled, there will be no generation of sentiment.

The extent to which sentiment rules a play gets beautifully illustrated as much in the plays of poor playwrights as in those of Kālidāsa and other masters of the art. Many of these poor playwrights, it must be conceded in fairness to them, were fluent versifiers, perhaps tolerable poets in patches: but as they totally lacked the ability to construct plays with coherence and significance that were capable of conveying a sentiment effectively to the spectators, their compositions are to-day regarded more in the light of epics with a few good stanzas in them. Some of them like Murāri and Rājaśekhara felt impelled to tell the complete story of Rāma from birth to the coronation, probably to satisfy canons other than the literary: the reader of their works will find them discontinuous, rambling and artistically unsatisfactory though he would acknowledge a certain accomplished craftsmanship in many of the verses. This is because these writers felt impelled by the fashion of the day to compose plays even though they did not possess the talent for it.

The failure of these playwrights is mainly due to their inability to handle the sentiment artistically. Many writers who wrote plays used the medium merely to tell a story (as in Murāri's *Anargharāghavam*) extolling the great and indeed unique qualities

of the hero: Murāri has confessed to such an intention being his motivating force in the prologue of his play. The evocation of sentiments through the judicious selection and exploitation of a few incidents was clearly not the objective of such writers. Such men should have stuck to the *kāvya* medium where such unplanned and highly discursive efforts would have been less unpardonable. In one sense it is easier to evoke the sentiment through a play than through an epic or a *kāvya*: there are all those stage devices, the dress, the music to call up the relevant emotions in a play, while in the latter type of works the writer has to do the job with the aid of only words. This was perhaps in part the reason why the play proved so attractive a medium. But a play has a complex structure and the various parts have to be knit together through one or more of the five connecting devices: the story has to be told and the sentiment evoked entirely through the dialogue without the poet being in a position to make his own observations. These are some of the many traps for the unwary and the less gifted to fall into: the attractiveness of the medium and the danger it poses suggests the analogy of the bright lamp having a fatal attraction for the impetuous moth. The possibilities of failure in this genre are so many it is no surprise that in the whole range of Saṃskṛt dramas there are no more than five or six which are artistically well regarded and can be successfully staged.

Thus sentiment becomes the desideratum for the success of a play. The basic mechanism by which a play (or even a poem) influences the spectator has been speculated upon in the east and the west. Barring details on which writers on poetics in India and the west differ, we find there is a general consensus that the experience undergone by the characters is transferred to the spectators who savour the experience and as a result a sense of pleasure. Bhaṭṭa Tauta a highly respected writer on poetics is quoted as saying that the experience of the epic characters, of the poet and then the reader (or the spectator) is the same, clearly suggesting that the experience of the poet is transferred through the medium of poetry and, in the case of a play, additionally through music and gestures and other stage devices

to the reader or the spectator. Bhaṭṭa Tauta's view is again emphasized by Abhinavagupta in the *Abhinavabhārati*

नायकस्य कवेः श्रोतुः समानोऽनुभवस्ततः ।

Locana, p. 156 (Ed. Tripathi)

In the west many writers accept this idea of transfer of experience as the basic mechanics of how poetry affects the reader.

Now an experience basically is centred round a feeling which forms its core; the experience is organised and built up around a feeling without which it has no existence. Experience is thus distinct from mere knowledge where no feeling need be involved. Experience may certainly contain elements of knowledge or of thought but they are peripheral, not central to it. Housman says in his *The Name and Nature of Poetry:* "It is the peculiar function of poetry not to transmit thought but to set up in the reader's sense a vibration corresponding to what was felt by the writer". The essential thing transferred is the emotional core, the vibration as powerfully phrased by Housman: the peripheral things like thought and fact may also incidentally get transferred with the emotion. It is not necessary that the experience should be pleasant for it to be communicated through poetry or drama. Unpleasant, even tragic experiences are often communicated through these media. It is, however, very necessary that the experience is of a powerful, stirring quality urging the poet to communicate it at all cost.

In Samskrit literature, whatever is said of poetry by way of its inward nature is true to a greater degree in the case of drama: drama is merely heightened poetry set in a specific pattern to meet the exigencies of the stage.

The point of all literary creation is to pass on a significant experience: the subject-matter of the experience may be anything under the sun or, indeed, above and beyond it. As it is asserted in Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra*, there is no branch of art, of science, of life itself that by itself need be kept out of the province of literary exercise :-

न तच्छास्त्रं न सा विद्या न तच्छिल्पं न ताः कलाः ।

Nāṭyaśāstra 1.113b

न स योगो न तज्ज्ञानं नाटके यन्न दृश्यते ।

Ibid. 1.114a

Barbara Howes affirms the same thing when she says "There is really no limit to subject-matter; the only limitation is in a writer's ability to make something out of it." The point, of course, is the value added, the metamorphosis of the experience accomplished in the poet's personality. While most of the do's and dont's laid down for the use of poets will apply in the case of playwrights too, there are some rules specially legislated for plays which have to do with the peculiarities characterising a stage-production. The transfer of experience is dependent on comprehension and the tendency of many Samskṛt writers being the excessive use of long compounds, high-sounding and unusual words and a generally recondite style of writing, the rhetoricious took particular care that these were avoided in plays.

Sāhityadarpana lays down that a play should be अगूढशब्दार्थ and क्षुद्रचूर्णकसंयुक्त, चूर्णक meaning a compounded word. The Nāṭya-darpaṇa echoes the same idea when it counts स्वल्पपद्यम् लघुगद्यम् as the *lakṣanas* of a good play. The reason behind this specific prohibition against long compounds and difficult diction is that while obscure passages in *kāvyas* can be re-read and a dictionary can be consulted, the dialogue in a play has to be grasped by all the spectators, pundit and layman alike, the moment it is uttered by the characters. And as the style of language in a poem is likely to be higher than that in prose, there is a specific prohibition against too many verses in a play (नातिप्रचुरपद्यवान्). We may note in passing that quite a few of these rules also aim at improving the tempo of the play apart from enhancing their comprehensibility.

In arts like painting it is easier to imitate nature than evoke sentiment. In poetry, on the other hand, it is easier to evoke sentiment. Burke in his *Philosophical Enquiry* says :

> "Poetry and rhetoric do not succeed in exact description so well as painting does: their business is, to effect rather by sympathy than imitation; to display rather the effect of things on the mind of the speaker, or of others, than to present a clear idea of the things themselves."

Words have an emotional evocative power and emotion-laden situations can be more effectively contrived through words which have greater range, suggestiveness, subtlety and flexibility than lines and colours. In drama, we have additionally, music and costumes, gestures and settings which wield a great evocative power particularly over the less cultivated spectators. Hence sentiment becomes the ruling factor of primary importance in the case of a play more than in the case of all other forms of art: it enjoys an undisputed primacy in the field of drama – which factor should be kept in the forefront all the time during the discussion of any aspect concerning plays.

2. UNITY OF SENTIMENT

We have seen that sentiment rules a play. Now writers on dramaturgy are all uniformly of the view that one sentiment only shall rule in a play though they admit others as ancillary. Dhanañjaya in his *Daśarūpaka* and Rāmacandra in his *Nāṭya-darpaṇa* make quite assertive statements laying down the unity of sentiment in plays. We may also refer to Ānandavardhana here. Everyone seems now to hold the view that it was Ānanda-vardhana who first recognised the significance of the unity of sentiment in literary works. In his view this principle of unity of sentiment applies to all literary works, not only to drama. Despite the attempts of the great *ālaṁkārika*, it is difficult to see one sentiment dominating long epics and *kāvyās*: one has to import considerable sophistry to prove the universal application of this principle in the world of *kāvyas*. It is neither possible nor pleasurable to keep up a single sentiment through long *kāvyas* which are seldom read through in one sitting: a play is quite a different matter: whatever its length, it must be witnessed in a single sitting. Hence the dominance of a single sentiment is both possible and artistically necessary in a play.

These rhetoricions all came on the scene after the most productive era of play-writing had ended. However it will be seen that all good playwrights observe this rule very meticulously and bad plays owe their lack of quality in most part to their authors transgressing this. It may be that this principle was part of an unwritten tradition all along and playwrights were aware of it : the writers on poetics and dramaturgy mostly put in writing what was already available as oral tradition. It is also likely that creatively endowed writers everywhere are instinctively aware of such cardinal principles with which to regulate their creations along artistic lines : an awareness of this is part of their innate pratibhā, their native poetic make-up. Ānandavardhana obviously refers to this when he says

वाल्मीकिव्यासमुख्याश्च ये प्रख्याता कवीश्वराः ।
तदभिप्रायबाह्योऽयं नास्माभिर्दर्शितो नयः ॥

Dhvanyāloka, III. Parikaraśloka

implying that he and other rhetoricions; get the inspiration for their ideas only from the views expressed by great creative poets or implied in their works.

Here we may digress for a moment to deal with the criticism that the three famous unities taught by Aristotle do not obtain in Samskṛt drama. Unity of sentiment is, as we have seen, an article of faith with the Samskṛt dramaturgists and with the Samskṛt playwrights. Unity of time is very much a part of their legislation : a writer on poetics lays down that the events described in an act should not occupy too many days.

नानेक दिननिर्वर्त्यकथया संप्रयोजितः ।

The unity of place is not perhaps specifically stressed in the texts on dramaturgy and was not regarded as very important. However, since we can assume that they did not have elaborate sets in those days and the place where the action is cast is left to be largely inferred by the spectators from the characters and their speeches, the lack of emphasis on unity of place did not affect the development of the sentiment.

Let us now proceed to examine the dramatic value of this concept of the unity of sentiment. The simplest and the most direct explanation of the need for keeping off other sentiments or for keeping them as subordinate to the main sentiment is that more than one sentiment played up in a drama would have an eddying effect on the mind of the spectators : what they want being orderliness they are not happy when there is eddying in their minds, when different emotions are churned up in a disorganised manner. Lascelles Abercrombie[3] has observed that men turn to literary experience in order that they may obtain that unity of impression, that organised pattern which he misses in life experiences. This unified, organised pattern, this unity of impressions can best be created through an organised unity of sentiment.

Further, as we have already noted, poetry is the vehicle of transfer of experience from the poet to the reader. If experiences are analysed we always find that they have, as their essential core, an emotion that dominates, that indeed gives life and organic form to that experience. It may have other emotions as subsidiary ones, it may have bits of information as peripheral to it. Hence, in passing on an experience if it is a genuine experience, the poet will naturally be passing on something of which a single emotion is the core. Where immature poets think up an experience to pass on, they unwittingly clutter it up with more than one emotion of roughly the same intensity. They would then realise it is more difficult to pass it on, that it meets with resistence from the rasikas. Hence we may conclude that the best poetry which is most naturally transferred to the reader without loss of impact is that where only one sentiment predominates.

The question of main and subordinate sentiments has been most beautifully discussed in the *Dhvanyāloka* from verse 17 to verse 31 of III *Uddyota.* It has been pointed out by Dr. K. K. Raja in his paper *Ānandavardhana and Aesthetics* that Ānandavardhana was the first to legislate on this question of the unity

3. *Principles of Literary Criticism*—Lascelles Abercrombie

of sentiment. Dr. K. Krishnamurthy of Dharwar and several other leading writers on aesthetics appear to agree with Dr. Raja's conclusion. Unfortunately this part of this unique and original work has not received the attention of thoughtful writers on poetics leading them on to expand the ideas first promulgated by Ānandavardhana. Probably this was because he mentions them in a manner suggesting that all this is incidental to the study of *dhvani* : on *dhvani* several writers have published papers, tracts and books but very little work seems to have been done on this aspect of the unity of sentiment and the anga-angi bhava, the question of ancillary sentiments and their relation to the main. This presumptuous attempt is to fill the gap left by the great masters in the field of poetics.

There are two aspects here relating to the *aṅga-angi bhāva* which require a more detailed consideration. One is that the rule provides for other sentiments being dealt with in subordination to the main one : the question is- will that not too cause this undesirable eddying? The truth is that once the main *sthāyi-bhāva* is roused and activated by the proper atmosphere and gestures (included in the list of agencies *vibhāvas, anubhāvās* and *vyabhicaribhāvas*), the poet bringing up other sentiments in an ancillary manner will not affect the *sthāyibhāva* now in an activated and dominating stage. In fact good playwrights can actually make the lesser sentiments (lesser that is for this play) subserve and reinforce the main sentiment. They do this of course primarily by permitting only cognate rasas to enter the play and by sketching them slightly ; they do not develop them to their full range : wtth admirable artistic restraint they make them just subserve their needs, no more.

The second aspect involves the concept of opposed sentiments The Samskṛt dramaturgist recognises four pairs of mutually opposed sentiments as given in this verse in *Śṛngāratilaka*, III 35.

शृङ्गार बीभत्सरसौ तथा वीरभयानकौ ।
रौद्राद्भुतौ तथा हास्यकरुणौ वैरिणौ मिथः ॥

Love is naturally opposed to disgust, heroism to fear, and humour to pathos: perhaps not so natural is the pair of opposites, anger and wonder. Tranquility quite naturally does not figure in this. Now if a playwright develops to a roughly equal degree both the opposites in any of these warring pairs, he is sure to churn up opposing sthāyis in the spectators with quite inartistic results. Hence a good playwright will take up for slight delineation only those ancillary rasas which do not work against the main sentiment. And where he finds it necessary to deal with an opposed sentiment, he is restrained by a maxim not to overdevelop it.

अविरोधी विरोधी वा रसोऽङ्गिनि रसान्तरे ।
परिपोषं न नेतव्यः तथा स्यादविरोधिता ॥

Dhvanyāloka, III. 24

By observing artistic restraint good playwrights can, where the need arises, take up one or more of the other sentiments and sketch them slightly, just enough to serve their purpose but not to that degree where it will work against the ruling sentiment and submerge it.

3. THE SELECTION OF THE MAIN SENTIMENT

In the verse in the *Daśarūpaka* to which a reference was made earlier, it has been laid down that only one sentiment should rule over a play, that should either be love or the heroic sentiment.

एको रसोऽङ्गीकर्तव्यः वीरः शृङ्गार एव वा ।
अङ्गमन्ये रसाः सर्वे कुर्यान्निर्वहणेऽद्भुतम् ॥

Daśarūpaka, 3,33

In straggling loosely constructed plays fashioned more on the Kāvya pattern like Murāri's *Anargharāghava* and Rājaśekhara's *Bālarāmāyana* there are several sentiments developed with result that they can scarcely be classed among plays and we shall therefore leave them out of count in this consideration. In most of the plays that have survived the flood of time, we find the sentiment of love, usually, love-in-separation, adopted as the

ruling sentiment; this is the case in all the three plays of Kālidāsa and in the *Mālatimādhava* of Bhavabhūti. The heroic sentiment dominates Bhavabhūti's *Mahāviracarita* and Bhaṭṭanārāyaṇa's *Veṇisaṁhāra*.

Bhavabhūti's claim that he regards pathos as the only sentiment of which the others are mere variants and that pathos is the dominant rasa of his magnum opus the *Uttararāmacarita* is very much open to question. Firstly this constitutes a departure from the maxim but a great innovator can certainly break new ground : his choice of *karuṇa* as the ruling sentiment must be solely judged by artistic canons. My second difficulty in the acceptance of the claim lies in the observed fact that his play *Uttaracarita* is clearly dominated by love-in-separation and not necessarily by *Karuṇa.* Pure *karuṇa* could equally well be evoked by depicting a mother who has lost her son or a friend who has lost hls bosom companion : when Bhavabhūti evokes it by depicting separated lovers one feels it is only a variant of love-in-separation, particularly because Bhavabhūti bows to the ancient tradition and brings in a happy ending by uniting the lovers. And the peculiarities we see in the emotional tone of his *Uttaracarita* are those that owe themselves to Bhavabhūti's propensity to overpaint any sentiment he takes up; they are not necessarily indicative of *karuṇa* rasa as distinct from *vipralambha-sṛṅgāra,* the swoonings and the wailings and the heavily emotion-charged diction notwithstanding. It is felt that Bhavabhūti's claim could be considered honest if he had been able to evoke pathos without delineating a pair of lovers and still produce a great play. I would lay a large wager he would have found the task difficult.

And it is a curious fact and it does not speak much of Bhavabhūti's consistency that he went on to construct a third play, centring it on the sentiment of love! (Here I am not making any assumptions relating to the chronology of the three plays : my observation is only statistical). In other words, of the three plays composed by hlm, only one is on karuṇa (if it is) and the other two have other sentiments i. e. love and the

heroic as their core. This must surely be taken as conclusive proof that Bhavabhūti did not inwardly believe in the principle he enunciated ; We need not make the mistake of taking his view more seriously than its propounder himself.

The most popular sentiment chosen by Samskṛt playwrights is undoubtedly love-in-separation. While we may readily appreciate love being chosen as the cardinal sentiment,[4] love being the staple food of poets all the world over, the question may be raised why it should invariably be love-in-separation and not love-in-union. The answer lies in a fundamental need for conflict in all creative literature. Love-in-union represents requital and fulfilment and perhaps a few stanzas could be written about it: after a little delineation it becomes too stale, too bland, too cloyingly uninteresting to be sustained. A certain amount of tension, anxiety, a striving to overcome apparently insuperable obstacles are necessary if the interest is to be sustained. And these can be provided only in love–in–separation. The more important plays coming under this are Kālidāsa's three plays, Bhavabhūti's *Mālatimādhava*, the *Ratnāvali* and the *Priyadarśikā* of King Harṣa, the *Svapnavāsavadattā* and the *Pratijñāyaugandharāyaṇa* of Bhāsa and Sūdraka's *Mṛchchakaṭika*.

Harṣa's third play *Nāgānanda* is unfortunately badly ruined through the author's religious impulses overcoming his artistic promptings. This is a play in which two sentiments successively dominate, love and what is termed for convenience, dayāvīra (whatever it may mean) and the play has been so constructed around these two different and powerful sentiments that the impression created on the reader is one of disorientation. This play can be used to illustrate how utterly necessary for the organic and artistic integrity of a play is this principle of the unity of sentiment.

The two important plays with *vīrarasa* as their principal sentiment are Bhavabhūti's *Mahāviracarita* and Bhaṭṭanārāyaṇa's *Veṇisamhāra*. The *Mahāviracarita* was obviously Bhavabhūti's

4. शृङ्गार एव मधुरः परः प्रह्लादनो रसः ।

Dhvanyāloka, II. 7

first literary effort and it suffers from the defect of immaturity. He did not realise when he composed it that his forte was not the delineation of the heroic sentiment: his talents lay rather in the depiction of pathos. He thus made a cardinal error in selecting his main sentiment. His second difficulty arose in having chosen to dramatise the story of Rāma from his marriage to his coronation. Several writers fell into the same error later on, many of them admirers of Bhavabhūti and willing to follow meekly in his footsteps. Thus Bhavabhūti can be accused directly of inflicting an epic story unfit as it is for dramatisation, by making an indifferent play out of it: the charge of having stimulated the production of a number of such indifferent plays by less gifted writers based on the same epic story can also be laid at his door. The *Rāmāyaṇa* makes wonderful reading as an epic and as Ryder and others have acclaimed, it is the greatest epic story in the world. But to attempt to dramatise the entire epic is to fly in the face of all the criteria of playwriting, it is to invite disaster.

Having chosen to make a play out of such material and having selected the heroic sentiment as the cardinal one Bhavabhūti has to blow up all the heroic parts of the story and underplay everything else. The wonderfully exalted passages of the *Ayodhya-kāṇḍa* and the tender love-laden *Sundarakāṇḍa* are mercilessly compressed to enable two full acts to be given to the tiresome Paraśurāma all because Rāma's victory over him promotes the heroic sentiment! The war between Rāma and Rāvaṇa has to be reported in detail as this is a play dominated by *Vīrarasa*. As however scenes of battle can not be shown on the stage, Bhavabhūti innovates the device of two celestial observers describing the various scenes of the war. It is easy to see that the impact of the war would be very much diminished in this second hand portrayal and this play and all the others forced to follow the same pattern lose a certain amount of stage-worthiness on this account. The last act is clearly the product of an immature playwright as it mainly describes the aerial journey of Rāma from Lanka to Ayodhya. With the resources then available do the stage manager, this act cannot be properly produced on

the stage and has little dramatic value: the admirers of Bhavabhūti who lacked totally any gifts at playwriting had to follow the the great master in this also and they have all faithfully added an act describing the aerial journey of Rāma.

Thus the first play by a major author depicting the heroic sentiment proved to be a poor product and this must have discouraged good playwrights from choosing this sentiment as the cardinal one. Bhaṭṭanārāyaṇa boldly took up the challenge implicit in the situation and one can record with pleasure the degree of success he has attained in the delineation of this rasa in the teeth of the inbuilt obstacles. To start with this author was most adept by native endowment in depicting the heroic sentiment and he was aware of his gift. Secondly he chose to dramatise a significant portion of the *Mahābhārata,* not the whole of it. Here again, *Mahābhārata* lends itself to be shaped into a heroic play more easily than the *Rāmāyaṇa:* the reason is that heroism is only a small part of the glorious epic the *Rāmāyaṇa,* while, the Pāṇḍavas being much lesser people than Rāma, there is not much else to depict in the second great epic but the long undramatic sermons: it would be admitted that the cardinal episodes of the *Mahābhārata* have heroism as their main motive force. If you take away the endless moralising, there is little else other than heroic exploits in the later epic: but the Rāmāyaṇa is a wonderful love story and a tale of sacrifice besides being a chronicle of war. Hence the Rāmāyaṇa has more to lose than the later epic if it is made into a play stressing only the heroic element.

The inbuilt obstacles referred to above are that heroic exploits cannot be shown on the stage and that even with the scissoring off of much of the story which the adroit playwright has accomplished, there is still too much story, too much action crammed in it. *Daśarūpaka* has this to say about the situation:

न चाति रसतो वस्तु दूरं विच्छिन्नतां नयेत् ।
रसं वा न तिरोदध्यात वस्त्वलंकारलक्षणैः ॥

***Daśarūpaka,* 3.32**

The objective being the delineation of sentiment, it is a good maxim not to smother it with too much story. That an act should not be overburdened with action is the prohibition laid down by *Sāhityadarpaṇa*

युक्तो न बहुभिः कार्यैः 6.13b

Even though such prohibitions if followed will tend to reduce the tempo of a play, still the grammarians thought it fit to legislate for them only in order to secure the primacy of sentiment in plays.

But despite these Bhaṭṭanārāyaṇa has succeeded in producing a highly evocative play which deservedly ranks high in the field of Samskṛt drama. And his success, apart from the merit of being able to manipulate the bigger metres (which many lesser playwright also possess) is due to the value he attaches to the development of the cardinal sentiment which he has chosen with such unerring judgment for his play.

4. THE SELECTION AND DELINEATION OF THE ANCILLARY SENTIMENTS

If one sentiment should rule a play and this maxim is all-important, why then should there be other sentiments coming in at all? This question gets added emphasis when we contemplate the risk in allowing in other sentiments as they well may mask or smother the main ruling rasa. *Dhvanyāloka* merely hints at two factors in verse 30 in the III *uddyota* and neither seems very important. There are atleast eight reasons why a good playwright lets in other rasas an ancillary: a bad writer may introduce other rasas for inartistic reasons like vanity, a desire to show off his ability to handle a variety of sentiments: he may also well suffer from bad judgment in the matter, resulting in a medley of sentiments crowding into his play over which he has little control.

The first factor I would consider is the need for the depiction of certain important parts of the story in order that continuity may be preserved: these parts may involve the depiction of other

than the main sentiment. In *Uttaracarita,* Bhavabhūti chose the *karuṇa* rasa but there are parts of the epic story where other rasas have to be shown : in the passage where Lava and Kuśa defeat the armies of Rāma led by Lakṣmaṇa's sons he has compulsorily to show the operation of the heroic sentiment. *Rāmāyaṇa* is too rich a mixture to permit of one sentiment only being developed : *Mahāvīracarita* suffers from this shortcoming, as was pointed out earlier. But even where the poet has sensibly selected a part of the epic story for dramatisation as in the *Uttaracarita,* he has had to permit the play of lesser sentiments. The heroic exploits of other classical heroes like Duṣyanta and Purūravas are to be referred to now and then and Kālidāsa had to allow the heroic sentiment a certain amount of play in his *Śākuntalam* and *Vikramōrvaśīyam.*

In the plays for which the plots have been taken from the epics, this compulsion will be more severely felt : as Ryder puts it, the stories of incarnate God are not to be lightly trifled with. It has been stated in the *Daśarūpaka* that if in the story taken up for dramatisation there are passages which involve the delineation of rasas opposed to the main sentiment or damage to the image of the hero such should be mercilessly scissored off or amended suitably :

यत्तत्रानुचितं किंचिद् नायकस्य रसस्य वा ।
विरुद्धं तत्परित्याज्यं अन्यथा वा प्रकल्पयेत् ॥

Daśarūpaka, 3.24

Where such elimination cannot be done, the amendment of the offending passage has to be carried out with great judgment. Usually good play-wrights present such passages in a brief manner in order to maintain continuity at the same time securing against these damaging the main sentiment. In such an abbreviated presentation, there is clearly no danger of the poet over-delineating any ancillary sentiments inherent in these passages.

The second is a very weighty reason. Man's nature is essentially restless and it craves for variety. Bland food is sought to be variegated with spicy side dishes : in apparel, we seek

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variety through well-designed borders and in the field of art the need is fulfilled by introducing lesser details - a tree or a grazing cow and employing a variety of colours. The great artist takes good care that elements introduced for the sake of variety do not take away from the harmony of the whole product. For instance in a painting involving a very limited number of figures, the painter may add a few lesser entities for the sake of variety taking care that the figures added do not detract from the merit of the picture. In a painting of a group of hunters the painter should not naturally add to it a timid animal like a deer or a rabbit calmly grazing nearby: he should rather paint a number of birds taking to their wings in excitement at the depredations of the hunters.

In Act I of *Śākuntala* the poet shows the birth and early development of love between Duṣyanta and Śakuntalā. A considerable amount of dialogue takes place among Duṣyanta, Anasūya and Priyamvadā with Śakuntalā contributing a few short sentences now and then. As many as fourteen verses are sung but as the two friends play a dominant role, the bulk of the conversation is in prose. The artist in Kālidāsa now feels it is time to change the tune without detriment to the main sentiment. The havoc caused by the elephant and the horses of Duṣyanta's army is quickly brought out in two verses and a little of a sense of fear is introduced, mainly though the catter verse:

तीव्राघातप्रतिहततरुस्कन्धलग्नैकदन्तः
पादाकृष्टव्रततिवलयासङ्गसंजातपाशः ।
मूर्तो विघ्नस्तपस इव नो भिन्नसारङ्गयूथः
धर्मारण्यम् प्रविशति गजः स्यन्दनालोकभीतः ॥

Act I verse 32

This dash of the fearful sentiment goes very well with the rest of the act and incidentally this episode helps the playwright to bring the dialogue and the act to a natural close.

In quite a similar manner Kālidāsa variegates the sentiment ni the third act too by introducing at the very end a lament by

the hermits about evil spirits appearing at the start of their evening rites.

सायन्तने सवनकर्मणि संप्रवृत्ते
वेदीं हुताशनवतीं परितः प्रकीर्णाः ।
छायाश्चरन्ति बहुधा भयमादधानाः
सन्ध्यापयोदकपिशाः पिशिताशनानाम् ॥

III. 25

Here again it is the fearful sentiment - just a dash of it, no more- but enough to provide welcome variety at the end of a very long passage in which love and nothing else is dealt with. Incidentally the poet very adroitly provides hereby an excuse for Duṣyanta to extend his stay in the penance grove and builds up a wonderful image in Śakuntala's mind, of Duṣyanta as a valorous fighter in addition to being a handsome man of a romantic nature.

In *Veṇīsaṁhāra* where there is practically an unremitting play of the heroic sentiment the playwright has sought to variegate the taste by the introduction of a little of love dalliance between Duryodhana and Bhānumati in the beginning of the second act. This definitely offers some relief from the continual rattle of battle drums reverberating through the play: but during the course of this passage Bhānumati's bad dream is discussed auguring ill for Duryodhana and this has a certain dramatic value as the narration of such a dream would certainly induce in an Indian theatre an atmosphere auguring disaster for the Kauravas.

Humour is a rare commodity in ancient Saṁskṛt works. Real humour flourishes in an atmosphere of irreverence and in classical times, there was little of this attitude of irreverence. The progressive irreverence for established institutions has been spawned by the movements against royalty and in favour of peoples' rights and the independence of the press. And true humour of the highest quality is a product of our own age. We can examine three passages where humour or what passed for humour in that serious-minded age is delineated with some degree of success.

One is the third act of *Mṛchchakaṭika* where Śarvilaka is shown stealing the golden casket from Maitreya where there is much genuine humour. The various uses to which a brahmin thief can put his sacred thread given in the verse

एतेन मापयति भित्तिषु कर्ममार्गम्
एतेन माचयति भूषणसंप्रयोगान् ।
उद्घाटको भवति यन्त्रदृढे कपाटे
दष्टस्य कीटभुजगैः परिवेष्टनम् च ॥

Mṛcbakaṭika 3.16

are quite amusing. And this humorous interlude provides the much needed diversion in an otherwise serious play with a murder motif and a long drawn out case in a court dominating it.

The second is where King Duṣyanta in the sixth act paints a picture of Śakuntalā with her two friends with a deer couple on a bank of the Mālini river with a pair of swans in the water; and he tells the Vidūṣaka that he intends to paint some more details in the picture. The Vidūṣaka in an aside speculates, "Surely the king is going to add the figures of heavily bearded hermits and spoil the whole picture!" This is as high as the ancients ever went in humour. And the spectator who has been listening to the king's laments for quite some time would be grateful for the comic relief afforded by the remark. And when the king who has not heard the remark states that it is his intention to place a *karṇikāra* flower on her ear with its filaments stroking her cheeks and a garland of lotus stalk on her chest, the sentiment of love-in-separation is stimulated: for does not this show how observant the king has been and how eagerly he has treasured all through these anguished months the image of Śakuntalā in the penance-grove!

The third instance of humour I would like to cite occurs in act V of *Svapnavāsavadatta*. When the king enters the summer-house in the company of the Vidūṣaka in the hope of finding Padmini who is reported to be ill and finds it empty he sits down on the bed prepared for Padmāvati and entreats the clown to

tell him a story. The clown in telling a story as required mixes up the names of towns with the names of kings and raises a little mirth. When corrected by the king he repeats the corrected version a number of times in a monotone to get it right and the king lulled by this reiteration falls asleep. This affords a bit of relief and variety to the spectators who have been hearing a lot of lamentation from the king on the loss of his queen Vāsavadattā. But in addition, with the Vidūṣaka going away, the stage is set for the famous dream scene from which the play derives its name. The dream scene powerfully accentuates the sentiment of love-in-separation of both the king and queen Vāsavadattā. Now if the Vidūṣaka had not started monotonously repeating the names of the fictional king and his capital city, Vatsarāja may not have fallen asleep in Padmāvatī's bed and the dream scene would not have been possible.

An important reason why ancillary rasas are worked in by good poets and playwrights may be that they are acting in unison with nature. We have already seen how normal human experiences have each core of an emotion dominating it and giving it life and significance. But from our own daily life we see that some experiences have more than one emotion though one emotion may well be predominant. A common enough experience is one of being snubbed by a snob on a social occasion in the presence of a number of friends. While the core emotion of such an experience burnt into the personality of the sufferer may be anger and resentment the person may also be afflicted by self-pity where pathos will be the directing emotion: he may also feel disgusted at the rudeness of the snob whose crude discourtesy in public is quite capable of promoting a feeling of active repulsion in the sufferer. Hence two emotions pathos and disgust may be attendant on the main one of anger.

Now, when we grant that experiences may have some ancillary emotions besides the core emotion, it would be an over-simplification if we insist on all poetic experience to have only one emotion: it would be opposed to nature. And what is natural and in tune with reality has a better chance of being transferre

to the reader than what is contrived and unnatural. Hence great poets may on quite a few occasions pass on experiences with more than one emotion where they occur naturally; it would be working against nature and they would fail in their purpose to pass on experiences without loss of impact, if they try to edit them and prune them to exclude all ancillary emotions, merely to ensure conformity with the one sentiment rule. And it would be found on examination that all the truly great plays in Saṁskṛt have in them more than one rasa delineated, the *aṅgāṅgibhāva*, at the same time, being kept up everywhere.

Examples of this abound: in the fourth act of Bhāsa's *Pratimānāṭaka* when Rāma and Bharata meet there are fine verses like

कस्यासौ सदृशतरः स्वरः पितुर्मे
गाम्भीर्यात् परिभवतीव मेघनादम् ।
यः कुर्वन् मम हृदयस्य बन्धुशंकाम्
सस्नेहः श्रुतिपथमिष्टतः प्रविष्टः ॥

Pratimānāṭaka 4.6

and

वक्षः प्रसारय कवाटपुटप्रमाणम्
आलिङ्ग माम् सुविपुलेन भुजद्वयेन ।
उन्नामयाननमिदं शरदिन्दुकल्पम्
प्रह्लादय व्यसनदग्धमिदं शरीरम् ॥

4.16

where the dominant sentiment in this experience of brotherly affection is attended by sorrow of Rāma at Daśaratha's death and the anguish of Bharata at Rāma's life of austerities. Again in that wonderful stanza in the first act of the same play Rāma's succinct description of how his coronation was stopped by the machinations of Manthara,

शत्रुघ्नलक्ष्मणगृहीतघटेऽभिषेके
छत्रे स्वयं नृपतिना रुदता गृहीते ।

संभ्रान्तया किमपि मन्थरया च कर्णे
राज्ञः शनैरभिहितं च न चास्मि राजा ॥
1.7

is shot through with many subtle suggested feelings which raise the level of the passage to that of the Ayodhyā Kāṇḍa of Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa*. The experience of a crown prince, the first born of the royal family being cheated out of his rightful throne must have a complex web of emotions in it and it reflects great credit on Bhāsa that he has been able to plumb its depth in a single verse.

Another reason for the introduction of subsidiary sentiments has to do with the exigencies of a dramatic production. In quite a few cases episodes centred on rasas other than the main have to be introduced to secure the proper dramatic effect; in a *kāvya* meant to be merely read such a necessity may not arise. If there are dull patches in a *kāvya*, the reader may put it aside and take it up later or omit the passage and read further on. It cannot be done in a play where it is necessary for the spectators' interest to be sustained throughout. Hence, in the *Daśarūpaka* there is a rule that in the denouement (at the fag end of the play) there should be introduced an element of surprise to make the spectators sit up and watch the play with renewed interest.

कुर्यान्निर्वहणेऽद्भुतम् ।
Daśarūpaka, 3.33

The importance of this may be more clear when we study the sources of the plots of most of the plays: the playwrights took their plots from well-known and highly popular works like the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Mahābhārata* and the *Kathāsaritsāgara* and most of the play-goers would know in advance how the play will end. It is therefore all the more necessary that a surprise twist is given at the end just when the spectators are disposed to take the end for granted. The scene in *Veṇisaṁhāra* (act VI) where everybody in the Pāṇḍava camp assumes that Duryodhana is coming to work more havoc after killing Bhīma is a vivid illustration of this. In act V of *Vikramorvaśīya* the playwright

throws in a great deal of shock and surprise by bringing Urvaśi and her son Āyus together on which, in conformity with the curse as amended by Indra, she has to ascend to the heaven: Urvaśi is over-wrought with grief and Purūravas prepares to abdicate and go to the forest and there is consternation everywhere - when Nārada comes and solves the problem to the satisfaction of everybody. In this incident where adbhuta has to be shown, the poet has deftly worked in the pathetic sentiment too and made the passage richer, more satisfying.

Apart from the introduction of the adbhuta rasa at the end, there are various other devices which good playwrights adopt to secure a dramatic effect and sustain spectator interest. In the fifth act of *Śākuntala*, the chief priest of Duṣyanta proposes as a solution to the imbroglio that Śakuntalā can stay with him in his house till after she delivers so that he can find out from the lines on the child's palm and other signs on his body whether he has indeed been sired by a king. This could have been a satisfactory solution for the impasse in a *kāvya* but would have proved too bland, too stale for a dramatic production. So Kālidāsa introduces the incident of Menakā suddenly appearing as a flash of light and carrying away her daughter to the Hemakūṭa. The result is that when the king recovers the ring and along with it the memories of Śakuntalā and his marrying her, he is beside himself with grief at the separation. He does not know what happened to Śakuntalā, where she was living, if she was alive at all - and all this feeds the flames of love in separation which the great dramatist can picture so effectively. Apart from the creation of a great dramatic effect on the stage, this incident of Menakā carrying off Śakuntalā accentuates the main rasa too. This imaginative incident evokes the adbhuta rasa and is clearly the invention of a mature and practical-minded playwright who knew how to tickle the less-cultivated members of his audience, usually of an excitable nature and avid for sensation.

In the *Svapnavāsavadatta* the king even after his marriage with Padmāvatī continues to be despondent and is prone to philosophise as in

दुःखं त्युक्तुं बद्धमूलोऽनुरागः
स्मृत्वा स्मृत्वायाति दुःखं नवत्वम् ।
यात्रा त्वेषा यद्विमुच्येह बाष्पम्
प्राप्तानृण्या याति बुद्धिः प्रसादम् ॥

4.6

A decisive battle has to be fought with Āruṇi and the king is in no frame of mind to fight. The dream sequence just manages to throw some doubt into the Vāsavadattā – perished in–the flames theory and this is enough to fire the king with martial enthusiasm to proclaim,

उपेत्य नागेन्द्रतुरङ्गतीर्णे
तमारुणिं दारुणकर्मदक्षम् ।
विकीर्णबाणोग्रतरङ्गभङ्गे
महार्णवाभे युधिनाशयामि ॥

5.13

And this important contribution to the progress of the story is contrived through a device – the dream scene – at once tender and beautiful which would stage wonderfully well and appeal to all sections of the audience.

Kālidāsa adopts a different device to secure a similar purpose. Duṣyanta is despondent and it is necessary to rouse him to battle heat: so Mātali belabours the Viduṣaka and his plaintive cries for help rouse the king to his wonted mental mood of impetuous courage and martial enthusiasm. That this was Mātali's intention is revealed in the passage

पश्चात् कोपयितुमायुष्मन्तं
तथा कृतवास्मि ।

and the verse

ज्वलति चलितेन्धनोऽग्निः
विप्रकृतः पन्नगः फणां कुरुते ।
प्रायः स्वं महिमानं
क्षोभात् प्रतिपद्यते हि जनः ॥

6.32

Instances may be multiplied but a discerning student can easily identify cases like the ones shown, where good playwrights make use of episodes with other than the main rasa in them to secure dramatic effect, to cater to spectator predilections, to satisfy the exigencies of a dramatic production, to structure the play more organically.

Yet another factor that may weigh with playwrights in choosing to introduce minor rasas may be to induce credibility in respect of sudden changes of heart in their characters. Credibility is another facet of appropriateness or aucitya and it has been declared that there is no other circumstance as destructive of sentiment as inappropriateness:

अनौचित्यादृते नान्यत् रसभङ्गस्य कारणम् ।

Dhvanyaloka III. Parikarasloka

As an illustration we may cite act IV of Bhāsa's *Avimāraka* where the hero's resolve to commit suicide is quickly banished and he discovers a solution to his problem of paying court to Kurangi without risk of discovery of the king's men. Such a quick and radical change would be otherwise incredible and the spectators' sympathy for and identification with the hero much reduced if the playwright had not introduced a superhuman element and made a Vidyādhara present him with a miraculous ring which will make the wearer invisible. The scene has a considerable amount of potential to evoke the sentiment of wonder and would go down extremely well with the gallery portion of the audience while making this sudden change of heart on the part of the hero credible to the elite and the cultivated sections of the theatre.

A sixth factor in favour of introducing minor rasas lies in the field of psychology. Human mind is a complex maze and many and varied are the feelings, prejudices, predilections that arise and float like thistledown in the atmosphere of the mind. No single feeling can have sole occupancy of the mind except for extremely short periods at the sharp point of impact. If characters are depicted as swayed all through by but a single emotion, it would not be true to human nature. And what is

not in conformity with nature is not acceptable tender in the kingdom of poetic experience: it will not be easily transferable from heart to heart.

As illustrations we can take Rāma's multifaceted personality. As a king he banished Sīta and as a king when he hesitates to kill Śambuka he asks his own right hand in scorn and pathos nicely blended

हे हस्त दक्षिण मृतस्य शिशोर्द्विजस्य
जीवातवे विसृज शूद्रमुनौ कृपाणम् ।
रामस्य बाहुरसि निर्भरगर्भखिन्न
सीताविवासनपटोः करुणा कुतस्ते ॥

Uttararāmacarita II. 10

Here valour in killing Śambuka is coloured by his self-critical appraisal of his policy of the single-minded pursuit of kingly duties which resulted earlier in his banishing Sītā. G. K. Bhat in his edition of *Uttara-rāmacaritam* makes the acute observation that the conflict between the king and the man which started at the time of Sītā's banishment has been raging on in his mind all these twelve years and again comes to a head now. His boundless love for Sītā meets in combat his stern sense of duty as a king and overwhelms it: Rāma the man, Rāma the greatest lover of the classical age has overcome Rāma the king. This sentiment of love is part of Rāma's emotional personality and has to be manifested. Then, again, in act VI of the same drama he displays great love for Lava and Kuśa. This is given expression in the famous verses

व्यतिषजति पदार्थनान्तरः कोऽपि हेतु-
र्न खलु बहिरुपाधीन्प्रीतयः संश्रयन्ते ।
विकसति हि पतङ्गस्योदये पुण्डरीकं
द्रवति च हिमरश्मावुद्गते चन्द्रकान्तः ॥

Uttararāmācarita 6.12

and

अङ्गादङ्गात्सृत इव निजस्नेहजो देहसारः
प्रादुर्भूय स्थित इव बहिश्चेतना धातुरेकः ।
सांद्रानन्दक्षुभिदहृदयप्रस्नवेनेव सृष्टो
गात्रं श्लेषे यदमृतरसस्रोतसा सिञ्चतीव ।।

Uttararāmacarita 6.22

The play may have karuṇa rasa as its central sentiment but Rāma is not only a husband but a father whose love for his children is overwhelming. It is most natural for any father to feel an affection for his son and though this feeling is not recognised and labelled among the rasas, this comes up again and again in literature as in life and compels itself on our attention–as in the 7th act of *Śākuntala* where one of the most famous verses of this great play occurs. Hence for completeness of characterisation, this subsentiment of affection for children has a place in the play.

Thus it is easy to see that no legislation in favour of the unity of sentiment can prevent the delineation of the other aspects of character of the chief dramatis personae. Such delineation is necessary to create a natural and credible picture of their many-sided character: too great an insistence on the unity of sentiment resulting in the ruthless expurgation of other sentiments may produce a garbled, one-sided version of their character which being unnatural will turn out to be inartistic.

We have till now seen instances where an important need has to be filled which can be done only by introducing minor sentiments even if they work some-what against the main. We have again examined cases where some dramatic purpose is fulfilled by the introduction of minor rasas which do not conflict with the main. Now we shall take up a type of cases where the dexterous playwright actually makes use of the ancillary sentiment to evoke the main more effectively. This takes some doing as normally the evoking of a different rasa may derange and discommode the main sentiment. It is no surprise that such a feat has been accomplished by only the most gifted of the playwrights.

One of the most outstanding examples of such a feat must be the manner in which Bhaṭṭanārāyaṇa strengthens his main sentiment *vīra* with two ancillary sentiments *karuṇa* and *raudra* in the third act of his play. Aśvatthāma learns of the circumstances of the death of his father Droṇa from his charioteer: even though he hears the charioteer describe the trickery that was adopted by the enemy to bring about the death of his father, very psychologically he is portrayed at first as overwhelmed by grief and not anger. In the first stage of the emotional efflorescence, the relationship between him and his father dominates to the exclusion of others. He says in the grip of a masochistic frenzy:

श्रुत्वा वधं मम मृषा सुतवत्सलेन
तातत्वया सह शरैरसवो विमुक्ताः ।
जीवाम्यहं पुनरहो भवता विनापि
क्रूरेऽपि तन्मयि मुधा तवपक्षपातः ॥
3.12

He then refers to the loss sustained by Kṛpa in the loss of his sister's husband and at the culmination of his self-hate, he decides to immolate himself

मद्वियोगभयात्तातः परलोकमितो गतः ।
करोम्यविरहं तस्य वत्सलस्य सदा पितुः ॥
3.17

and to renounce his weapon.

गृहीतं येनासीः परिभव भयान्तोचितमपि
प्रभावाद्यस्या भून्न खलु तव कश्चिन्न विषयः ।
परित्यक्तं तेन त्वमसि सुत शोकान्न तु भयात्
विमोक्ष्ये शस्त्र त्वमहमपि यतः स्वस्ति भवते
3 19

At this point a very provocative announcement is heard, presumably made by a partisan of the Kauravas asking the leaders of the Kaurava hosts how they all can suffer in silence the audacity of Dhṛṣṭadyumna who is now walking calmly to his camp after killing Droṇa in a particularly mean and deceitful manner. This ignites the powder never very far from the surface of

Aśvatthāma's personality and in anger nicely blended with contempt for the foe he roars his defiance thus :

परित्यक्ते देहे रणशिरसि शोकान्धमनसा
शिरः श्वा काको वा द्रुपदतनयो वा परिमृशेत् ।
स्फुरद्दिव्यास्त्रौघद्रविणमदमत्तस्य च रिपोः
ममैवायं पादः शिरसि निहितस्तस्य न करः ॥

3.22

and thus

तातं शस्त्रग्रहणविमुखं निश्चयेनोपलभ्य
त्यक्त्वा शंकां खलु विदधः पाणिमस्योत्तमाङ्गे ।
अश्वत्थामा करधृतधनुः पाण्डुपाञ्चालसेना-
तूलोत्क्षेपप्रलयपवनः किं न यातः स्मृतिं ते ॥

3.23

and thus

पितुर्मूर्ध्नि स्पृष्टे ज्वलदनलभास्वत्परशुना
कृतं यद्रामेण श्रुतिमुपगतं यन्न भवतां ।
किमद्याश्वत्थामा तदरिरुधिरासारविघसम्
न कर्म क्रोधान्धः प्रभवति विधातुं रणमुखे ॥

3.25

At this stage his sense of bereavement, his unfathomable anguish seems to have been wholly converted into anger: this is a conversion that is quite natural particularly in a personality like Aśvatthāmā's. There is a verse reportedly occurring in *Kṛtyarāvaṇa* which confirms this psychological phenomenon:

विवृद्धात्माप्यगाधोऽपि दुरन्तोऽपि महानपि ।
वाडवेनेव जलधिः शोकः क्रोधेन पीयते ॥

Kṛtyarāvaṇa; q. in *Abhināvabhakti*

By a very natural transition all the flood of anguish has been converted without loss into a generous wrath : this naturally then issues forth as the heroic sentiment in the famous verse

योो यः शास्त्रं बिभर्ति स्वभुजगुरुमदः पाण्डवीनां चमूनाम्
योो यः पाञ्चालगोत्रे शिशुरधिकवयाः गर्भशय्यां गतो वा ।
योो यस्तत्कर्मसाक्षी चरति मयि रणे यश्च यश्च प्रतीपः
क्रोधान्धस्तस्य तस्य स्वयमपि जगतां अन्तकस्यन्तकोऽहम् ।।
3.32

It would be admitted that far from the ancillary sentiments discommoding and undermining the main, in this case the playwright has used them as effective fuel to reinforce raging heroism, the cardinal sentiment of the play. In doing this, while the very basic nature of Aśvatthāmā has been of the greatest help to the poet, he has very dexteriously used Karṇa to provoke him and to speed up the process of conversion of grief via anger to heroism.

In a similar manner, in the sixth act, the playwright brings in a certain amount of adbhuta rasa as required: but in doing so, he again repeats this same adroit trick with notable success. Yudhiṣṭhira on learning that Bhīma and Arjuna are dead and Duryodhana even now is walking to their camp to work further havoc, expresses extreme grief in a beautiful verse

तां वत्सलामनभिवाद्य विनीतमम्बां
गाढं च मामनुपगुह्य मयाप्यनुक्तः ।
एतांस्वयंवरवधूं दयितामदृष्ट्वा
दीर्घप्रवासमयि तात कथं गतोऽसि ।।
6.34

It then gets quickly converted into a combination of anger and reckless courage when he challenges the villain with

प्रियमनुजमपश्यंस्तं जरासन्धशत्रुं
कुपितहरकिरातद्वेषिणं तं च वत्सं ।
त्वमिव कठिनचेताः प्राणितुं नास्मि शक्तः
न तु पुनरपहर्तुं बाणवर्षैस्तवासून् ।।
6.36

What is to be noted and admired in both the instances is the naturalness, even the inevitability of the transition from the ancillary to the main sentiment. In both the cases, the sense of personal loss induces the deepest feelings of grief at the first impact from which the poet, using grief as the stepping stone takes the spectators on to the heroic sentiment.

A question may be raised why such a stepping-stone technique is at all necessary, however dexterously the poet may have accomplished this. Why could not the playwright have painted the *vira rasa* straightaway without going through an intermediary stage involving the ancillary sentiment of grief? The reason is interesting and it reflects great credit on the playwright for his psychological acumen. Most if not all of the spectators are likely to be personally acquainted with bereavements, with the loss of a dearly loved relation. And grief at the loss of a father or a brother is therefore more easily communicated, transferred to them from the character on the stage. Heroism, even in those early times, is likely to be less familiar to them: in any age heroism is a sentiment confined to the few and is more often read about and admired in others than personally experienced. Hence the playwright has adroitly evoked the more natural, more widely-felt karuṇa rasa first and used it to produce the less common heroic sentiment without any loss whatever.

In *Svapnavāsavadatta*, Bhāsa develops *śṛṅgāra* as the main sentiment. The story is peculiar and it permits the playwright to develop this sentiment in both its aspects - in union and in separation. Usually playwrights are able to show them in succession but here, in this play, Bhāsa has been able to show them simultaneously: this has been possible because Vatsarāja while enjoying love in union with Padmāvati continues to nurse the warmest affection for Vāsavadattā whom he believes to be dead. It is however quite permissible to regard the latter sentiment, not as love in separation but as pathos. For while Vāsavadattā has not in reality been burnt in the Lāvaṇaka fire but is very much alive and is seen most of the time on the stage, the king has been led to believe she perished in the flames and for

identifying the *rasa,* it is the feeling of the *āśraya,* in this case the king, that really matters. Rāma in *Uttaracarita* does not think Sitā is dead but only parted from him: but Udayaṇa firmly believes Vāsavadattā to be dead and one will not be wrong if one identifies the sentiment as pathos. Now this pathos is beautifully developed from the scene in the first act where the stranger describes before Padmāvati and Vāsavadattā the travails of the 'bereaved' king. Padmāvati has a tender heart and is so moved by the king's anguish (she correctly deduces how loving the king should be) she begins to be attracted towards him. Vāsavadattā who too is present is moved beyond measure at this evidence of the king's love for her and is very critical of Yaugandharāyaṇa's strategic moves which have caused all this suffering: her love-in-separation gets much reinforced by this. Thus the sentiment of pathos actively reinforces love in the two principal women characters. The king himself in a state of helplessness induced by the tragedy feels in need of an emotional prop and finds it in Padmāvati: he begins to love her deeply as a result. So this same pathos kindles love for Padmāvati in the hero even though he assigns to her a place in his heart lower to that occupied by Vāsavadatta when importuned by the Vidūṣaka. That he has fallen in love with Padmāvati is evident from the statement of the king

कामेनोज्जयिनीं गते मयि तदा कामप्यवस्थां गते
दृष्ट्वा स्वैरमवन्तिराजतनयां पञ्चेषवः पातिताः ।
तैरद्यापि सशल्यमेव हृदयं भूयश्च विद्धा वयम्
पञ्चेषुर्मदनो यदा कथमयं षष्ठः शरः पातितः ॥

Svapnavāsavadatta 4.1

That his newfound love for Padmāvati has had the effect of reducing his sense of anguish and propping him up emotionally is revealed in.

रूपश्रिया समुदितां गुणतश्च युक्तां
लब्ध्वा प्रियां मम तु मन्द इवाद्य शोकः ।

5.2

Indeed the capacity of the matchless minister Yaugandharāyaṇa in judging the character of his king must be admired. He correctly calculated that if the military power of the king had to be reinforced by the might of king Darśaka, the alliance with him would have to be cemented by a marriage between Udayaṇa and Darśaka's sister Padmāvatī. But the king would never agree to a marriage with any other woman, such was his infatuation for his queen Vasavadattā. Hence the shrewd minister thinks up the complicated ruse of a fire at Lāvaṇaka in which Vāsavadattā is shown to have perished, while actually she is spirited away by the minister and handed over to Padmāvatī's care in the guise of a brahmin lady. The minister judges the king's mind perfectly and acts on the judgment that unless the king's tendency to centre all his affection on Vāsavadattā is disturbed (rudely, as it actually happens, the king almost dying of grief at the tragedy), he would never show interest in any other girl. The tragedy thus is an inevitable factor in the minister's network of strategy to bring to pass Udayaṇa's marriage with princess Padmāvatī. If this is so in the plot of the story, then in the emotional sequence of the play, too, the pathos engendered by the tragedy becomes a very necessary pre-condition to the love that blossoms later on. The dexterous playwright uses the tragedy to play up love-in-separation in Vāsavadattā and stir up feelings of love in the king and Padmāvatī for each other.

Pathos is consanguinary with love as the former promotes a certain frame of mind in which helplessness, tenderness and a certain longing are all present mixed - a frame of mind in which love can flourish ; a certain type of woman in whom the motherly instincts predominate would be drawn towards men in such a frame of mind ; they would like to mother such men and many a romance has developed from this in real life as well as in fiction. Cārudatta in *Mṛchchakaṭika* often muses bitterly on poverty uttering verses like

दारिद्र्यात्पुरुषस्य बान्धवजनो वाक्ये न संतिष्ठते
सुस्निग्धा विमुखी भवन्ति सुहृदः स्फारीभवन्त्यापदः ।

सत्त्वं ह्रासमुपैति शालिशशिनः कान्तिः परिम्लायते
पापं कर्म च यत्परैरपि कृतं तत्तस्य संभाव्यते ॥

Mṛcchakaṭika I. 36

and

सङ्गं नैव हि कश्चिदस्य कुरुते संभाषते नादरात्
संप्राप्तोगृहमुत्सवेषु धनिनां सावज्ञमालोक्यते ।
दूरादेव महाजनस्य विहरत्यल्पच्छदो लज्जया
मन्ये निर्धनता प्रकाममपरं षष्ठं महापातकम् ॥

Mṛcchakaṭika I. 37

Again in the fifth act he ruefully contemplates the custom of courtesans to patronise only rich people and curses his own penurious condition. And every time he thus wallows in self-pity, Vasantasena comes to his house and love progresses fed by the hero's pathetic state of mind. In fact for Vasantasenā an impecunious but blemishless person like Cārudatta must have come as a breath of fresh wind after she had spent years in the miasma of rich and lecherous admirers. The love between the rich courtesan Vasantasenā and the poor, married Cārudatta must have received a boost from their contrasting financial position. The image of Cārudatta as an once-rich philanthropist who reduced himself to poverty by giving away his wealth to all those who came in supplication to him was well publicised in the city and Vasantasenā was much attracted by the high character of Cārudatta whose present poverty touches a chord in her own noble heart. This too must rank as one of the cases where a minor sentiment actually helps to evoke the major sentiment of the play.

5. THE EVOCATION OF THE MAIN SENTIMENT

In a discussion on the evocation of the main sentiment, we shall confine our observations only to the special features of the problem in the field of drama. Consequently the ground covered by Dhvanyāloka and other works dealing with the general problem of rasa evocation will not be traversed here.

We cannot however quite dispense with the *Dhvanyāloka* altogether. For in this matchless work are strewn about in abundant profusion not only fully developed ideas but hints, suggestions and half-formed notions which light up the path in the surrounding darkness. There is a verse stating that just as one plot remains the major thread in a work, so also one sentiment can be made the major:

कार्यमेकं यथा व्यापि प्रबन्धस्य विधीयते।
तथा रसस्यापि विधौ विरोधो नैव विद्यते॥

Dhvanyāloka III. 23

Now the plot in a work is referred to in this verse only as an analogy and no more. But it is rewarding if we pursue the idea that it has a greater significance than merely serving to evoke a simile.

The postulate is that if the plot of a play is an integrated organic whole moving round a central pivot, the chances are that it ensures a unity also of sentiment in the play. Hence, instead of the integrity of the plot being related to the integrity of sentiment in the relationship of mere analogues these two are related as cause and effect. The question now arises which is the cause and which the effect.

An integrated plot moves on the impulse of a single motivation and though the onward movement is harried by adverse motivations and temporarily even put off the set course on that account, it inexorably marches on to the desired goal. In such a plot each part is related to the whole and has significance and purport only in relation to the central motivation. A plot just put together for the purpose of a theatrical production may contain a number of loosely connected episodes not organically related to each other and more importantly to the central motivation and not necessarily advancing it. Ānandavardhana was clearly thinking of a well-knit and organically integrated plot as is inferable from the *Locana* on this verse which makes it clear that a plot should not get mixed up with minor plots in a manner in which its importance suffers. If this is granted then

every rounded well-knit plot has a single motivation: motivation is emotion-based and emotion playing on the *sthāyi bhāva* produces *rasa*. Hence every integrated plot can have only one dominant sentiment born out of a dominant emotion which gives the onward impulse to the whole play. Minor *rasas* friendly to the dominant one may serve as accessories and inimical rasas may temporarily disturb the onward march.

We are perhaps reading too much into a simple analogy furnished by the *dhvani-kāra*. But even if we dismiss the idea that the *dhvanikāra* intended more than what meets the eye here, we find from our own literary and theatrical experience that an integrated, well-regulated plot most often has to have a single dominant sentiment keeping the plot on its predestined course.

Unlike today's theatrical performances, the plays of the era of which the best representatives were those of Bhāsa, Kālidāsa and Bhavabhūti lasted several hours: the practice of staging plays throughout the night was not unknown in those timee. Hence one may feel that the playwrights of this epoch had all the time in the world to evoke the main sentiment. Still one finds that some at least of the perceptive dramatists gave hints of the main *rasa* to be evoked in the play even at the stage of the prologue thus preparing the spectators quite early in the proceedings for the enjoyment of the main sentiment.

Bhavabhūti is a person who believes in very specific statements: he does not have much use for the gentle art of suggestion. In the *Mahāviracarita*, he announces through the *sūtradhāra* that the heroic is going to be the main sentiment of the play.

महापुरुषसंरंभो यत्र गम्भीर भीषणः ।
प्रसन्नकर्कशा यत्र विपुलार्था च भारती ॥
अप्राकृतेषु पात्रेषु यत्र वीरः स्थितो रसः ।
भेदैः सूक्ष्मैरभिव्यक्तैः प्रत्याधारं विभज्यते ॥

Mahāviracarita I. 2

In the *Uttararāmacarita* the poet was writing at the height of his powers. In this he does not announce his intentions in this

straight fashion : he does not spell out his plan to delineate the sentiment of pathos till a much later stage. In the prologue he evokes the sympathy of the spectators for Sitā in these words

कठोरगर्भामपि जानकीं विमुच्य गुरुजनस्तत्र गतः ।

Uttararāmacarita I. 'dialogue'

The word *vimucya* is ominous: it carries with it a subtle suggestion of an abandonment of her by the husband himself in the future. Then he goes on to put a very fine verse in the mouth of the stage director giving a delicate hint that the play is going to have a painful slander about the chastity of a woman as its central core :

सर्वथा व्यवहर्तव्यं कुतो ह्यवचनीयता ।
यथा स्त्रीणां तथा वाचां साधुत्वे दुर्जनो जनः ॥

I. 5

The actor who converses with him takes on the dialogue from this to the way the people talk wickedly about the queen

देव्या अपि हि वैदेह्याः सापवादो यतो जनः ।
रक्षोगृहस्थितिर्मूलं अग्निशुद्धौ त्वनिश्चयः ॥

I. 6

We can regard these passages as deliberately put in to evoke the first trickle of karuṇa from the hearts of the spectators to prepare them for the flood of that *rasa* let loose by the play itself.

In his third play (not the third necessarily in the chronological order) the *Mālatīmādhava,* he makes an actor ask the question in the prologue, "What are the qualities that the sophisticated and learned sections of the audience look for in a play?" In replying the *sūtradhāra* recites a verse

भूम्ना रसानां गहनाः प्रयोगाः सौहार्दहृद्यानि विचेष्टितानि ।
औद्धत्यमायोजितकामसूत्रं चित्राः कथा वाचि विदग्धता च ॥

I. 4

From the words सौहार्दहृद्यानि विचेष्टितानि and more specifically from the words आयोजितकामसूत्रम् a love dominated play is

stated to be clearly preferred. And as it is later stated that *Mālatimādhava* contains most of these qualities one can state with certainty that Bhavabhūti has more or less announced his intention to enthrone love as the dominant *rasa* in his play. And from the way it has been brought out in the prologue, the spectators would have learnt to expect a play with love as the main sentiment, with some pleasurable anticipation. Incidentally from the slightly greater sophistication displayed in revealing the main sentiment in this play it may be assumed chronologically to be next to *Mahāviracarita* but certainly earlier to *Uttaracarita*, this slender evidence confirming the conclusion arrived at by many indologists on the basis of many other factors.

In the *Veṇisaṁhāra* the poet starts off with three verses as *nāndi* out of which the third, describing the way Śiva's act of burning the three cities was looked upon by different persons has a certain element of *vira rasa.* Then come the two verses with a whole lot of punning: one can say with certainty that very few persons in the audience would have been able to follow both the meanings intended here. However there is a hint of blood and fighters falling on the ground in them – enough to evoke the first vague incipient strands of *vira rasa* among the spectators.

Then comes Bhīmasena with the verse fairly sputtering with rage

लाक्षागृहानलविषान्नसभाप्रवेशः
प्राणेषु वित्तनिचयेषु च नः प्रहृत्य ।
आकृष्य पाण्डववधूपरिधानकेशान्
स्वस्था भवन्ति मयिजीवति धार्तराष्ट्राः ॥

Veṇisambāva I. 8

and in the next few minutes the raudra and close on its heels its ally and friend the vira rasas are effectively evoked.

In the *Mṛcchakaṭika* the playwright believes in an open announcement in the prologue on what the play is about, in the verses

अवन्तिपुर्यां द्विजसार्थवाहो
युवा दरिद्रः किल चारुदत्तः ।
गुणानुरक्ता गणिका च यस्य
वसन्तशोभेव वसन्तसेना ॥
तयोरिदं सत्सुरतोत्सवाश्रयं
नयप्रचारं व्यवहार दुष्टताम् ।
खलस्वभावं भवितव्यतां तथा
चकार सर्वं किल शूद्रको नृपः ॥

Mṛcchakaṭika I. 6

It may be seen here that while the only sentiment mentioned here is love, the playwright additionally mentions some other things to be purveyed by the play like the corrupt judicial system which may whet the interest of the spectators and make them agog to see the play.

Unlike a *kāvya*, a play is seen presented on the stage with arranged backgrounds, scenes and setting and the players are dressed up in suitable attire to resemble those whom they portray. In a play there are powerful physical ingredients assembled and set up to a design creating a very evocative atmosphere. Good playwrights try to milk all the possible advantage out of this feature, to actualise the rich potential this offers for the development of sentiment. Let us analyse how this is done in two major plays the *Uttaracarita* and the *Śākuntala*.

In the *Uttaracarita* Rāma discards Sītā, acting on the principle that a king's wife must be above suspicion. This decision is preceded by a terrific conflict between his boundless love for her and his sense of justice, propriety and an instinctive realisation of Sītā's purity on the one hand and a dogged sense of kingly duty on the other. The decision does not naturally resolve the conflict : the die was cast but the king was far from being reconciled to the consequences of his act.

Rāma spends twelve unhappy years unsure all the time whether in discarding Sītā he had acted wisely. But the

atmosphere of the palace, the official residence of the king stimulates the kingly mode of thinking more than the human mode of feeling for a loving wife, and the simmering conflict does not come to a head as yet.

But the dexterous playwright brings his hero to the forests in the guise of a mission to kill Śambuka. Now the volcano that is Rāma's heart, long rumbling in the years spent in the palace now bursts forth sending out the molten lava of pathos in an overwhelming flood. The reason obviously is that Rāma realised the extent of his loss only in the atmosphere of the forests. As it is said, present misery is accentuated by memories of previous happiness recollected; Rāma's romantic potential had found fulfilment not in the years in the palace immediately after the wedding but in the forest to which they had been banished by the order of Daśaratha. In the capital city, Rāma as the popular prince must have been too busy to attend to the emotional needs of his wife. In the forests there were no such preoccupations and except for an occasional misadventure life was an idyll. Rāma recounts with obvious nostalgia how happy they had been in the woods in the famous verse

किमपि किमपि मन्दं मन्दमासक्तियोगात्
अविरलितकपोलम् जल्पतोरक्रमेण ।
अशिथिलपरिरम्भव्यापृतैकैकदोष्णोः
अविदितगतयामा रात्रिरेव व्यरंसीत् ॥

Uttararāmacarita I. 27

All the sense of deprivation, all the realisation of what a wonderful potential for happiness he had denied himself by his own decree issued in a frenzy of moral rectitude now comes flooding back to him. The situation is fully exploited by the playwright who can be depended upon to wring the last drop of pathos out of such situations. But the highest credit should be chalked up to him, not so much for the almost melodramatic pathos he delineates hereabouts but for his adroitness in bringing Rāma to the scenes of his former happiness where the suggestive

power of the atmosphere serves to call forth the deepest longings in the unhappy lover.

For a far subtler use of atmosphere we have to go to Kālidāsa, the touch artist. Duṣyanta's rejection of Śākuntalā in the fifth act is projected by the playwright as a consequence of the operation of the sage's curse. The ring is eventually discovered and the memory of the marriage he had contracted with her comes back to the king, plunging him into the depths of despair till the happy denouement in the celestial hermitage where he gets united with Śakuntalā.

We must remember that plays are seen by people of all levels and unless they appeal to all or most of them, they cannot be regarded as successful. Bharata affirms that drama is a highly popular form of entertainment which attracts various levels of the society. Kālidāsa himself is intensely aware of this when he makes a character in *Mālavikāgnimitra* say

नाट्यं भिन्नरुचेर्जनस्य बहुधाप्येकं समाराधनम् ॥

Māḷaṅkāgnimitra I. 4

It is certainly possible that Kālidāsa invented the curse factor in order that the unsophisticated section of the spectators might not think ill of the king who might lose their sympathy as a result. Curses figured very much in the purāṇas and were something an Indian public would swallow without resistance. Hence we can assume that Kālidāsa invented the episode of Durvāsa's curse only in order that the gallery may forgive the king his rejection of Śakuntalā, thus redeeming the image of his hero from the level of a profligate philanderer. In the eyes of the less cultivated section of the spectators this is vitally important: for them, subtle shades of characterisation look unimpressive: only strong colours appeal to them. For them, a hero should be wholly good and the villain an unmitigated scoundrel.

But the elite section of the crowd will not be tickled by such coarse unsophisticated devices: for them something subtler is needed and Kālidāsa purveys this subtler appeal through the agency of atmosphere. The king sees Śakuntalā in the first three

acts in the penance grounds which are her natural habitant, where she is completely at home. Then several months elapse and the king; steeped in the preoccupations of kingship may have allowed the matter to slip from his mind. Kings have been known to flirt with women and in every case they did not feel they have to receive them as members of their harem. Perhaps the one thing Duṣyanta did not expect was that the girl would come to his own court and demand to be received.

When this happens consider the king's frame of mind. He had not sent for Śakuntalā and now the dereliction of his duty stands revealed before all his court. Further the girl now standing before him in the sophisticated court in the highly urbanised royal capital somehow looks very much a stranger. The court of any king is a focal centre of deceit, guile, opportunism and unethical self-seeking and is set in a capital city which is the hub of all commercial activity symbolising hurry and a mercenery greed - a very far cry indeed from the tranquil and spiritual atmosphere of the penance grove. She is out of place in these entirely different surroundings and therefore does not look the same girl whom he had secretly wedded. The king is much irritated by the chastisement he receives from the slip of an ascetic boy who calls him a liar and a thief in front of all his courtiers.

So Śakuntalā is rejected and is taken to the hermitage of Kaśyapa. A little later the king sees the ring and perhaps the chain of memories is called up by the jewel which had played such prominent part in the sylvan romance years ago. But when the king sees Śakuntalā in the tranquil and spiritual atmosphere of Kaśyapa's penance grove, the last vestiges of doubt vanish as she is now seen in her natural habitat in the same way as he saw her earlier (in the first three acts) in Kaṇva's penance grove. She now appears resplendently natural, unsophisticated, totally guileless and free of coquetry. The king remembers now with a shock of remorse all the details of the secret romance in the earthly penance grove: the process of recognition is now complete.

It is not the intention to suggest seriously that the invention of the curse is wholly unnecessary for the story and that the change in the atmosphere on two occasions (from the sylvan to the urban and from the urban to the sylvan) fully takes care of the main problem before the poet of how to salvage the king's image. All that is suggested here is that while the less sophisticated section of the spectators may have to rely wholly on the curse episode in order to understand and forgive the forgetfulness of the king, the cultivated among them need not. For them the subtly suggestive changes of atmosphere will more convincingly bring home the conversion of the king: they shall be seeing Śakuntalā at home in Kaṇva's penance grove, then transported to the utterly alien court of the king and lastly in the ethereally tranquil penance grove of the father of the gods, just as the king saw her. And the king's failure to recognise her and his later recognition will appear highly convincing. On a substratum of faith engendered by the curse episode, real emotional conviction is likely to be set up in their minds by the deft changes of atmosphere wrought by the master playwright. Curses are part of popular fare and are indispensable for the grosser-minded spectator: subtle suggestion through atmosphere is elitist caviare. While the curse episode may furnish intellectual conviction to the dilittante it is from the magic of atmospheric change that he is likely to derive the greater emotional satisfaction. Love in its twin moods of *sambhoga* and *vipralambha* is savoured more fully by the cognoscenti on account of the inspired change of environs wrought by the dramatist than by so bland and artlessly plebeian a device as a sage's curse.

We may now proceed to consider certain obstacles standing in the way of a playwright developing a main sentiment. One of the chief obstacles is himself in the sense that quite a few playwrights are not artists through and through: they turn out to be fanatical sectarians or determined moralists who merely want to make use of a popular medium to propagate their pet ideas. A piece of art should exist for itself: it cannot function as a means to a different end outside of itself and still remain art, To be more specific it should provide as its sole objective,

aesthetic enjoyment. Ācārya Dhananjaya writing in an era of preoccupation with religion, philosophy and ethics had the admirable clarity of vision to observe at the very beginning of his great work that the objective of all plays being to afford pleasure, only fools will go to them for knowledge and instruction in the four puruṣārthas.

आनन्दनिष्यन्दिषु रूपकेषु
व्युत्पत्तिमात्रं फलमल्पबुद्धिः ।
योऽपीतिहासादिवदाह साधुः
तस्मै नमः स्वादुपराङ्मुखाय ॥

Daśarūpoka I. 6

This kind of insistence is most necessary in India, a land of compulsive moralists. But despite all this, works were written with a clearly discernible moral or religious objective and critics are not wanting who claim to see great virtues in them. The most striking examples are *Prabodhacandrodaya* and *Saṅkalpasūryodaya*: with some hesitancy we can include even Harṣa's *Nāgānanda* in this list. But the list, alas, is much bigger as it includes plays written with Gods as their heroes where the glorification of the deity is more important than the evocation of an aesthetic sentiment. Plays like the *Anargharāghava* were written more to extol Rāma as a great incarnation of God than to provide literary pleasure. Murāri asks a rhetorical question "Which character in all the past works of this country combined in himself all the qualities prescribed for a hero of a play, except Rāma? Hence it is that I have decided to write about Rāma though his story has become a little stale owing to overwriting."

यदि क्षुण्णं पूर्वैरिति जहति रामस्य चरितम् ।
गुणैरेतावद्भिर्जगति पुनरन्यो जयति कः ॥

Anargharāghava I. 9

To Murāri and his kin obviously the regulations relating to the character of the hero have appealed overwhelmingly, to the total exclusion of the much more important prescription about sentiment. The compellingly superior *Rāmāyaṇa* story with its all-

round appeal proved a trap to the unwary who thought what makes a good epic would automatically make a good play too.

Harṣa's *Nāgānanda* is obviously a play designed to preach the *ahimsā* doctrine dear to the Buddhists and is frankly didactic. A sentiment called *dayāvira* has been invented to describe the prevailing mood in the second half of the play. All acts of sacrifice involve great courage but the attempt to bring the sacrifice of Jīmūtavāhana under the heading of *vira rasa* is not very convincing. *Vira rasa* by its definition conjures up something very different from this supposed variant, *dayāvira*. One has the feeling that *Daśarūpaka* makes provision for this variant only because Harṣa the king of true conformists and the darling of all dramaturgists had composed the *Nāgānanda*. This view derives some strength from the fact that Bharaṭa makes no provision for this variant of the heroic sentiment nor does Abhinavagupta recognise it in his commentary. One of the *anubhāvas* counted under *vira rasa* is *tyāga* which in Saṁskṛt means philanthropy and not always sacrifice in the limited sense. In the *Abhinava-bhārati*, when citing works where this sentiment predominates, there is no where any mention of the *Nāgānanda* which play was clearly known to him.

Harṣa is very much admired by all pedantic pundits for his pronounced proclivity to conform to all the necessary and not quite necessary rules of dramaturgy. In the *Ratnāvali* and in the *Priyadarśikā* he conforms to these rules with zest. But when it comes to a question of sermonising about his own brand of religion, he is willing to throw overboard even the essential rules which touch the heartland of drama. Thus he delineates love as the main sentiment of the first three acts and then this special variant of the heroic sentiment, *dayāvira* the dominant rasa of the rest of the play. There is no organic connection between the two parts: they indeed are two totally unrelated episodes in the life of the hero and it is most unfortunate that Harṣa encompassed both in his play in defiance of the principle of the unity of sentiment. It is for this reason that the *Ratnāvali* and not the *Nāgānanda* is regarded as Harṣa's best play even though

the amours of Vatsarāja must have been overwritten even in his days.

A second obstacle operating against a playwright delineating a sentiment whole-heartedly is the predilection of some writers towards a display of their scholarship. In India the tradition is that a poet gets a very good grounding in grammar and prosody and in the different departments of knowledge like mīmāmsā, yoga and nyāya before he begins his career as a poet. Bhavabhūti, Murāri and some others speak with obvious pride about their extensive knowledge in various fields. Murāri even makes a point that only those like him who have suffered in the *gurukula* (at the hands of an exacting preceptor) can profess to have mastery over the language and lay claim to the mantle of a poet.

देवीं वाचमुपासते हि बहवः सारं तु सारस्वतम्
जानीते नितरां असौ गुरुकुलक्लिष्टो मुरारिः कविः ।
अब्धिर्लङ्घित एव वानरभटैः किंत्वस्यगंभीरतां
आपातालनिमग्नपीवरतनुः जानाति मन्थाचलः ॥

Anargharāghava Act I found in footnote of K.M. edn.

That hard work alone cannot help to produce good poetry and that more intangible qualities are needed has been emphasised by Keats in his letter to James Augustus Hessey: "The Genius of Poetry must work out its own salvation in a man. It cannot be matured by law and precept but by sensation and watchfulness in itself. That which is creative must create itself."

It is one thing to enrich one's work with relevant and interesting matter drawn from one's reading and experience and quite another to load it with evidence of one's extensive reading just for the purpose of display. Bhavabhūti started the trend and his heavy-handed pedantry set the pattern for less gifted men like Murāri to go the whole hog in this direction. The point that plays should be simple and easy to understand has already been taken: here the desire to show off their scholarship has been allowed to become a preoccupation in some cases naturally putting in the shade the really vital aspect of sentiment.

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In a real sense an overwhelming plot may be quite an obstacle to a sentiment being developed to the fullest limits of artistry. The warning contained in the line

युक्तो न बहुभिः कार्यैः

is particularly relevant in this context of the development of sentiment. Too many incidents coming thick and fast are excellent for building up tempo but can effectively crowd out sentiment. And it reflects great credit on our law-givers in this field that they put sentiment on a pedestal and even tempo is made to subserve this deity. Tempo which is quick-paced movement of the story is a most essential ingredient in a play if it is to sustain spectator interest: stunt pictures provide plenty of it as do the american 'westerns'. These pictures are most popular with the very young and the uncultivated theatre-goers: the same is true of plays where the main point is the continuous purveyal of excitement. But these do not constitute high drama whose heart is sentiment; and the resolute way the Indian drama turgists have rejected the demands of the immature theatre-goer and enthroned sentiment deserves the warmest approbation.

The Saṁskṛt play that has suffered most on account of an over-powering plot is, of course, the *Mudrārākṣasa.* Viśākhadatta must be congratulated for his originality and his daring imagination in forging such a complex but well-knit plot. However, in the strict sense of the term, play, we should pronounce the rather harsh judgment that it does not amount to a proper play at all. It has, it is true, plenty of suspense, tempo, excitement: it has a central purpose. The story has been told neatly, crisply, with admirable economy of words. The versification will pass muster, if we are not too demanding. But there is no sentiment and so there is no play. This is not as harsh a judgment as would seem on the surface. Most of the wild-west yarns and detective thrillers and spy stories have a restless tempo and command a very wide readership: but these do not rate as literature. *Mudrārākṣasa* may have the format of a Saṁskṛt play, with the division into acts, interludes and all other externals but it does not rate as a play, nevertheless.

Many of the religious plays also suffer from this shortcoming in addition to the one of didactism to which a reference was made earlier. Bhāsa had a lot of anecdotes to relate in the *Bālacarita* leaving him too breathless to delineate a proper sentiment. His *Abhiṣekanāṭaka* and Bhavabhūti's *Mahāvīracarita* are also tarred by the same brush - of too much story, too little consistent sentiment. But the discerning reader discovers how much success is achieved by these two great dramatists when they select a manageable part of the great epic story to dramatise as in the *Pratimānāṭaka* and the *Uttararāmacarita.* It is not incidental - it must have weighed as a cardinal factor with these great playwrights when picking the material for their plays - that the epic portions selected are inherently dramatic. The plays of Kālidāsa are not cluttered with too much plot - the stories of the three plays can be summarised in ten sentences each, adequately. The one play with a lot of story which is not short on sentiment either is the *Mṛcchakaṭika* - and the dexterous playwright could manage this apparent miracle only by making his play much too long: many modern Saṁskṛt drama groups who are attracted by its high stage worthiness are nevertheless repelled by its overpowering length: they compromise by editing it to a manageable length to suit the modern theatre-goer.

If we analyse the eight rasas from the standpoint of spectator reaction, we find that while love and heroism and pathos make the spectator's heart expand and draw him towards the characters, the three sentiments anger, fear and disgust tend to contract the heart and repel the spectator. Artistic delight is greater and more sustained in the case of plays dominated by sentiments which are expansive, which have a tendency to draw the spectators towards the characters: it is demonstrably less in the others. A little of these repelling sentiments may be dramatically effective but a good playwright should be extremely circumspect about over indulgence in their delineation. A little of anger and of fear in the enemy ranks will set off the heroic sentiment of a play: even a little disgust may mix allright with the right ingredients. But a little more of them - and it is surprising how little can turn out to be that little more - and the play becomes

warped, the artistic response blighted. Kālidāsa whose judgment is never at fault has never been guilty of excess in this direction. Bhavabhūti as an immature tyro tends to overdelineate the perpetually irate Paraśurāma in the *Mahāvīracarita*; but otherwise his judgment too cannot be faulted. But Harṣa in *Nāgānanda* and Śūdraka in *Mṛcchakaṭika* tend to over-draw disgusting scenes without a sense of artistic restraint and propriety; and witness the result! It is to be noted that in both the cases the disgust-provoking passages occur at the very end of the plays– which is all the more unfortunate, for their memory is more likely to last for a while in the mental screen of the spectators. The playwrights must have fallen into this error, deluded by the prospect of accentuating the *dayā-vīra* (whatever it may signify) of the king in *Nāgānanda* and the thrill of pleasure when Cārudatta is reprieved at last, by playing up the gruesome scenes of the snakes' torment and the debasing predicament of the condemned prisoner. But it reflects little credit on their taste and their ability to manage the sentiments within artistic restraints.

There is a ban in works on dramaturgy on certain things being shown on the stage like war and death and scenes of bathing or people putting on clothes.

दूराध्वानं वधं युद्धं राज्यदेशादिविप्लवम् ।
संरोधं भोजनं स्नानं सुरतं चानुलेपनम् ।
अम्बरग्रहणादीनि प्रत्यक्षाणि न निर्दिशेत् ॥

Daśarūpaka 3.34

This speaks highly of the impeccable taste of these law-givers. But playwrights get round these prohibitions somehow as, witness the war scenes of the Ramāyaṇa and the *Mahābhārata* getting narrated by *gandharvas* or even ogres and ogresses in the plays based on these epics. Death, itself quickly shown, without displaying gruesome details like blood flowing may evoke less disgust: the anticipation of violent death as in *Mṛcchakaṭika*, not lightly sketched but elaborately worked out over several pages is decidedly more repulsive: Śūdraka, though a crowned king, appears to have had a decided preference for the seamy side of life throughout the play which fairly teems with gamblers.

philandering profligates, murderers, thieves, courtesans and professional executioners. It is a curious coincidence that the other playwright whom we have accused of inartistic excess also happens to be a crowned head.

Another obstacle that not only impedes the development of a rasa but generally lowers the artistic level of a play in the eyes of the more refined spectators arises from an immaturity in character drawing. The less gifted playwright generally has a tendency to draw characters as wholly good or unmitigatedly wicked. Life does not show such startlingly differentiated light-and-shade effects in the field of character and personality profile. In life we are more apt to find normally good people acting adversely to the interests of others owing to the conspiracy of circumstances. Gifted dramatists like Kālidāsa and Bhavabhūti clearly recognised this fact of experience. In the *Śākuntala* and *Uttararāmacarita,* no one is cast in the role of a villain. The sufferings of Śakuntalā and Sītā were, on the surface, caused by their own husbands who cannot be named the villains of the plays! In reality fate is the villain who has the sadistic satisfaction of having pain inflicted on the heroines by the heroes themselves. Such a portrayal and more fundamentally, the selection of such story material indicate maturity of outlook and a sound, even inspired judgment of psychological factors.

Such a mature portrayal reinforces the sentiment on more than one count: it represents a truer interpretation of life and therefore is more acceptable and transferable to the spectator. Dislike assuming the extreme form of disgust is not a very artistic emotion and as we have had occasion to observe earlier, good playwrights use this *bībhatsa rasa* sparingly, rather like garlic in cookery, a little going a long way. The villain drawn in the way he is in melodrama attracts this emotion of disgust towards himself. The machinations of an adverse fate being impersonal do not have this effect, hence the superiority of the device of making fate the villain of the piece.

Bhavabhūti first conceived the idea of relating all the villainies in his play to one central villain. In Vālmīki, Mantharā and

Kaikeyī plot the banishment of Rāma for their own benefit and their plot starts and ends with them. Bhavabhūti, wishing to make Rāvaṇa the central villain of the entire play (*Mahāvīra-carita*), makes the incidents in the palace a part of Rāvaṇa's grand strategy: Mālyavān, Rāvaṇa's adviser had arranged for Śūrpaṇakha to enter Mantharā's body so that she might encompass his master plan of destroying Rāma in the forests and handing over Sītā to Rāvaṇa to fulfill his carnal lust. Bhavabhūti's admirers faithfully follow him even in this aberration. Perhaps he and the others who imitated him thought that just as one sentiment organically unites the play, so will one central villain master-minding all the dirty work in the play. It is a happy sign and a tribute to his mature genius that Bhavabhūti did not attempt any such centralisation in the *Uttararāmacarita* where a malevolent fate and no human agency plays the villain.

In this matter as everywhere else in the field of art, restraint is everything and the supreme master knows instinctively where to stop. Unfortunately the books on dramaturgy have little to say on the specific question of the portrayal of the *pratināyaka*, as well as on the general question of artistic restraint. A great part of *Daśarūpaka* is wasted over meaningless minutiae, by developing a large number of categories under every head. No sane writer of plays could ever have put stile to the palm leaf to write a play after mastering all these categories, hoping to conform to all the prescriptions and prohibitions. The age of intellectual and artistic innovation had set in and writers felt they could be original only by multiplying the categories without any regard to the real needs of the situation. And I feel that it is no accident that no play of significance came to be composed after Dhanañjaya compiled his grammar of dramaturgy.